

Chairs Lieber and Nosse, and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Dr. Rachel Knox. As a physician, and a member of a family of physicians with backgrounds in Emergency Medicine, Anesthesia, Family Medicine, Integrative Medicine, Preventive Medicine and Endocannabinology, I have dedicated my life to a full understanding of health and wellness supported by evidence and research. I am here to support the Governor's suggested budget for the Oregon Health Authority, a portion of which would fund the implementation of a psilocybin therapy program that voters approved when they passed Measure 109 in November.

As a physician, I see far too many patients suffering because the current options we have for treating anxiety and depression simply fall short. A growing body of evidence from university research institutions like Johns Hopkins, UCLA and NYU shows that psilocybin therapy can be effective in treating depression, anxiety and addiction. In particular, psilocybin therapy can provide substantial relief for patients that suffer for too long when our current treatment options fail.

The work of OHA and the Psilocybin Advisory board over the next two years is critical to the programs overall success.. In order to start to meet the demands of our mental health crisis it is essential that this program have the support from OHA and the advisory board to meet two parallel goals: equitable access and professional, licensed systems that emphasize safety.

First, we must use the next two years to ensure equitable access to psilocybin therapy, so we do not perpetuate the deep inequities that persist in our healthcare system. We know that coronavirus has disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous and People of Color in Oregon and has worsened health disparities in our state. We must ensure that the implementation of psilocybin therapy provides affordable access to people in all our communities, regardless of race, geography or income.

Second, we must use the next two years to create thorough training for facilitators and guidelines that maximize safety for people. Measure 109 provided a framework for licensed facilitators in licensed facilities. I support OHA and the Psilocybin Advisory Board in working to design a program that provides psilocybin therapy to as many people as possible, while still building in the safeguards we need. The combination of access with regulation is the proper framework for health.

The Governor's proposed budget makes a careful two-year process possible and I urge your support.

Thank you.

